

5 July 2018

Amanda Harvey
Director, Sydney Region East Planning Services
Department of Planning and Environment
320 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Harvey

**55 – 67 PARRAMATTA ROAD, HOMEBUSH
PRELIMINARY PLANNING PROPOSAL**

APPLICATION FOR REZONING REVIEW

On 14 June 2018, Strathfield Council formally notified Walker Homebush Pty Ltd that it would not support a Planning Proposal request submitted in December 2017, and amended in April 2018.

We believe the proposal has strategic and site specific merit and warrants consultation and further investigation. This is described in the requested Planning Proposal, and summarised in Attachment 1.

Accordingly, please find enclosed a Rezoning Review application, accompanied by the following documentation:

1. A completed application form and cheque.
2. The requested Planning Proposal dated April 2018, with accompanying letters and technical studies.
3. The report considered by the Strathfield Local Planning Panel on 3 May 2018, and the Panel recommendations from that meeting.
4. Walker's response to the Panel's recommendations dated 22 May 2018.
5. The report considered by Strathfield Municipal Council on 6 June 2018, and the minutes of that meeting.
6. Letter from Council notifying Walker of the refusal dated 14 June 2018.
7. Walker has not made any reportable political donations under Section 10.4 of the Act.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you need further information or wish to discuss anything.

Yours sincerely



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ATTACHMENT ONE

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC AND SITE SPECIFIC MERIT

1.0 THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT

The site at 55-67 Parramatta Road and 12-24 Powell Street, Homebush is approximately 7,518 m² in area and has a 58.4m frontage to Parramatta Road and a 76m frontage to Powell Street.

It is centrally located in north Homebush less than 200 metres north of Homebush Station, 2.5 km south east from Sydney Olympic Park and 9.2 km east from Parramatta.

It is vacant, aside from the Homebush Theatre, which is a striking heritage listed building that is a potential asset to the locality and the community, but is in a poor state of repair and unoccupied.



Figure 1: The site and locality

North Homebush environment is degraded, with many neglected buildings and vacant sites that appear to be in hiatus awaiting until strategic planning processes are completed.

The area is dominated by Parramatta Rd and the M4, and its buildings and sites are vacant or in poor repair.

Contemporary apartment buildings of varying quality have uniformly failed to contribute to a cohesive, high quality, active public domain, nor attract shops and services for their residents.

These projects do not mitigate the locality's relatively hostile pedestrian environment, and are characterised by vacant ground level shops, or residential courtyard walls.

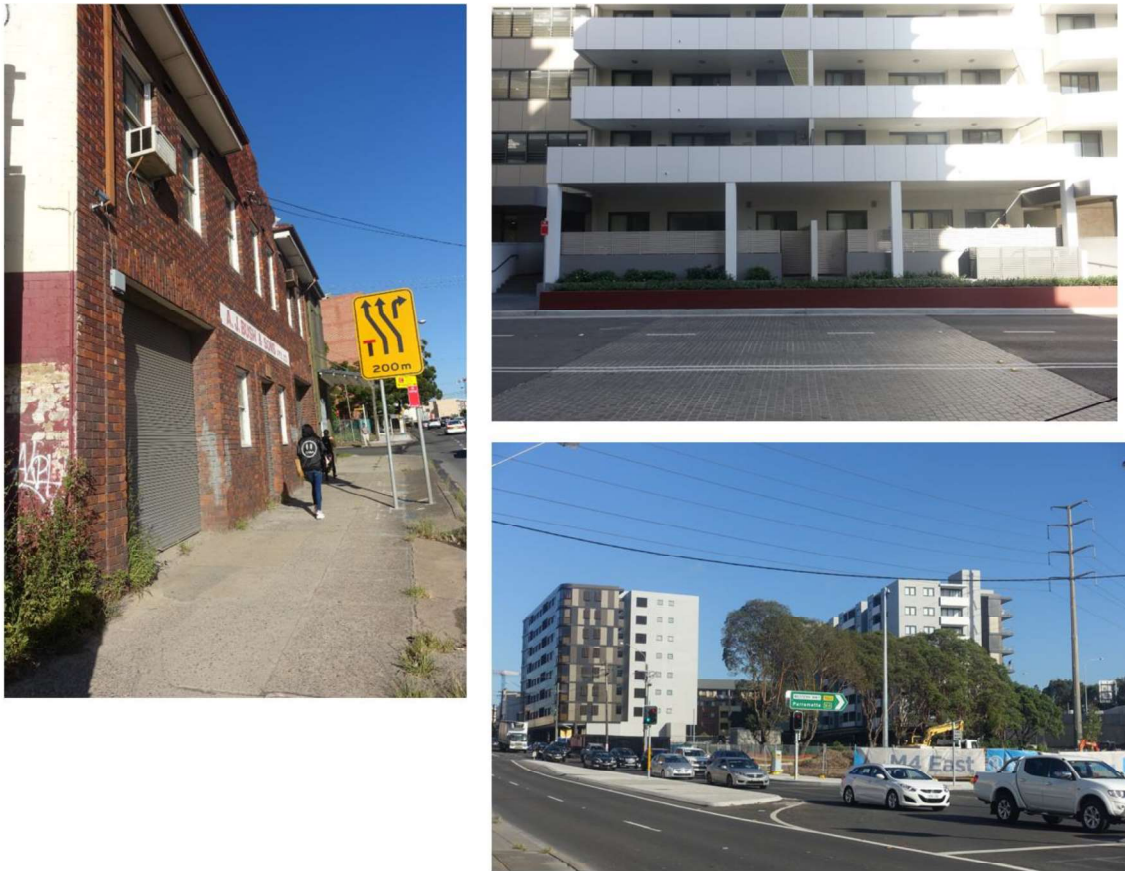
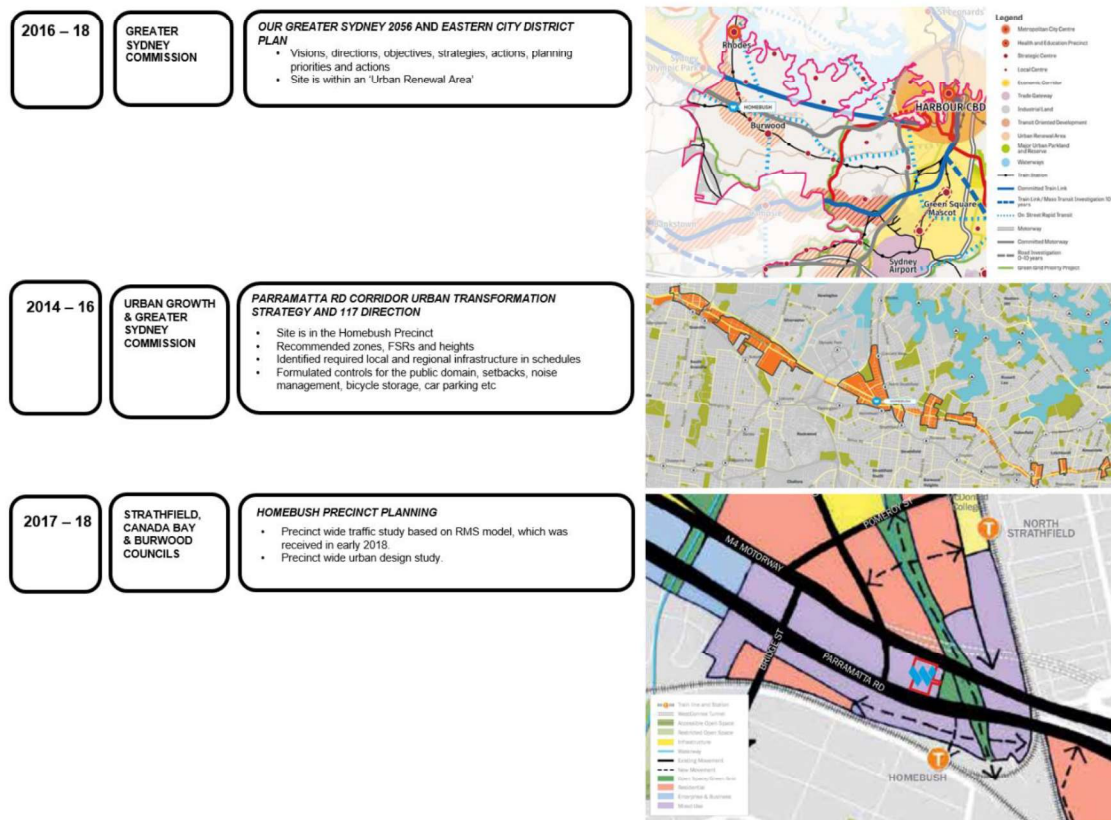


Figure 2: The hostile pedestrian environment

2.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The strategic merit of the site is unquestionable. It is large and mostly vacant, within the middle ring of the Sydney metropolitan area, and within a 3 minute walk to Homebush Station, which provides public transport access to the Sydney and Parramatta CBDs within 30 minutes.

The site and locality's strategic significance has been recognised by the State Government and Strathfield Council, who have committed significant agency and time resources to a multitude of planning processes with the aim of delivering high quality urban renewal, well served by infrastructure.



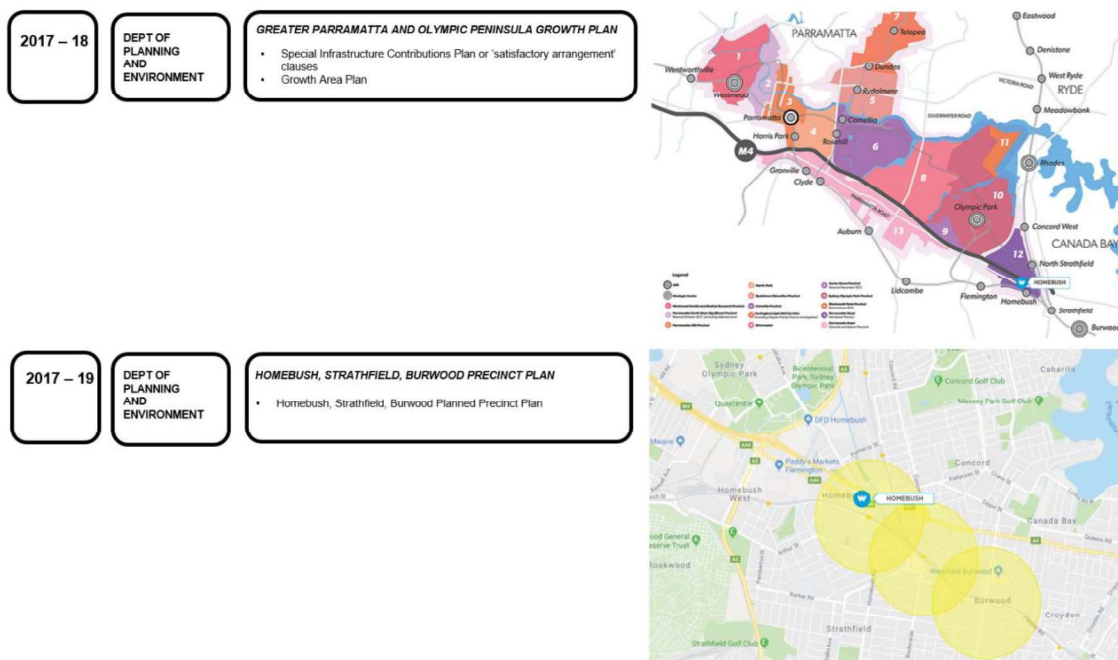


Figure 3: Strategic framework

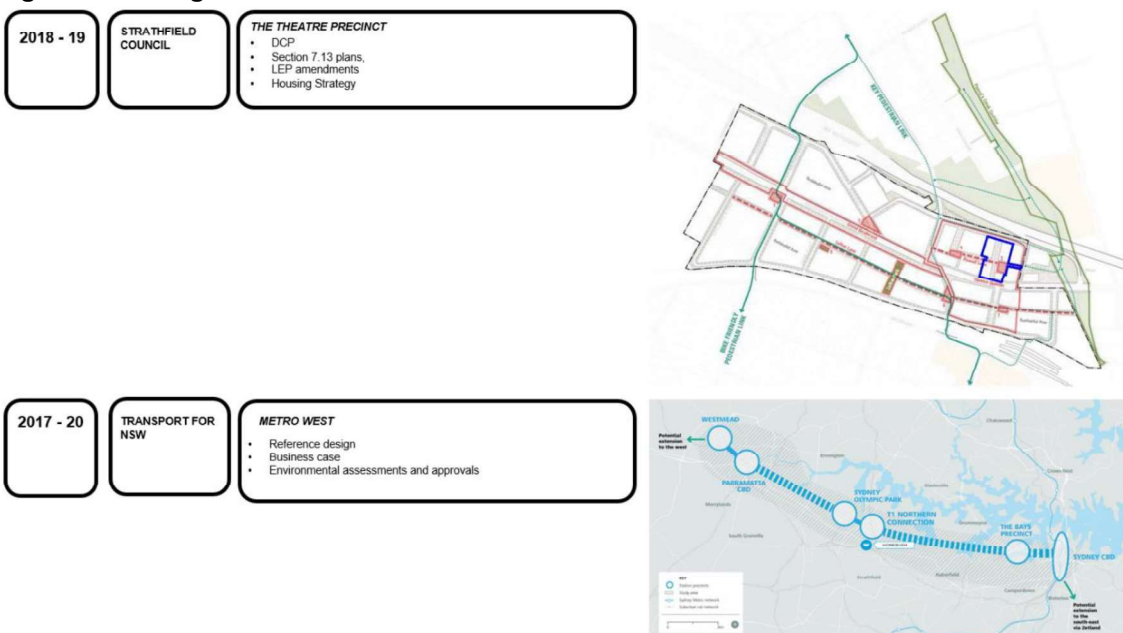


Figure 3: Strategic framework

Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy (PRCUTS)

The timeframes outlined in the PRCUTS have not been met, with key milestones missed, or about to be. Development consents for new projects will not be obtained in 2018, and construction will not commence. The site is within an area that is nominated for 'release' between 2016 and 2023. It is already 18 months into that period, and no rezonings have occurred.

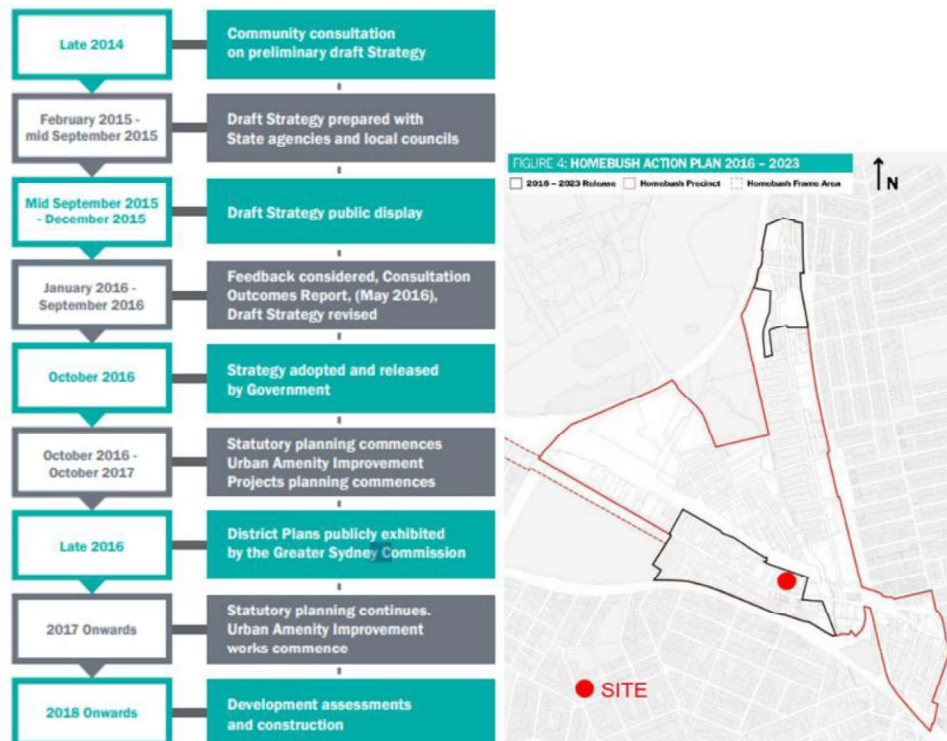


Figure 4: Planning Progress is already well behind the PRUCT's Schedule

Source: PRCUTS page 80 and PRUCTS Implementation Plan 2016 – 2023, page 25

Further, PRCUTS recognises the imperative to conserve and refurbish heritage items and provides for 'accelerated or prioritised planning processes for development that appropriately preserves, maintains and utilises these community assets' (page 63).

The Theatre's refurbishment should be a planning priority for both Council and the Panel. It is currently derelict and has been vacant for many years. Frankly, it is a depressing eyesore and blight.

Commencement of strategic planning for this site will assist in bringing delivery of new projects closer in line with the planned time frame, and the PRCUTS vision for the Homebush Precinct, which is in the *Planning and Design Guidelines*:

Homebush Precinct will become a new, mixed use precinct for the Corridor, housing a new community of residents attracted to the area for its high amenity and access to employment at Parramatta CBD and Sydney Olympic Park.

The precinct will provide a long term supply of housing stock to meet increasing demand as Sydney Olympic Park grows into a new city. (page 33)

Sitting between Sydney's two main CBDs, Homebush can be transformed into an active and varied hub, blending higher density housing and a mix of different uses, supported by a network of green links and open spaces with walking access to four train stations.

Living and Working There

Homebush will be a focus for high density housing, with a hub of activity between Homebush, North Strathfield, Concord West and Strathfield Stations. Both Parramatta Road and George Street will form main streets to build on the character of the Bakehouse Quarter and the curve of Parramatta Road.

Taller residential buildings will mark the centre of activity at the Precinct's core. The network of streets to the north and west from here will be easy and safe to walk through, with medium-density housing and the green corridor of Powells Creek. The area around Flemington Markets will have a new employment and retail focus. (page 128)

The Vision is reflected in the PRUCTS structure plan, which lays out where those uses are to be located.

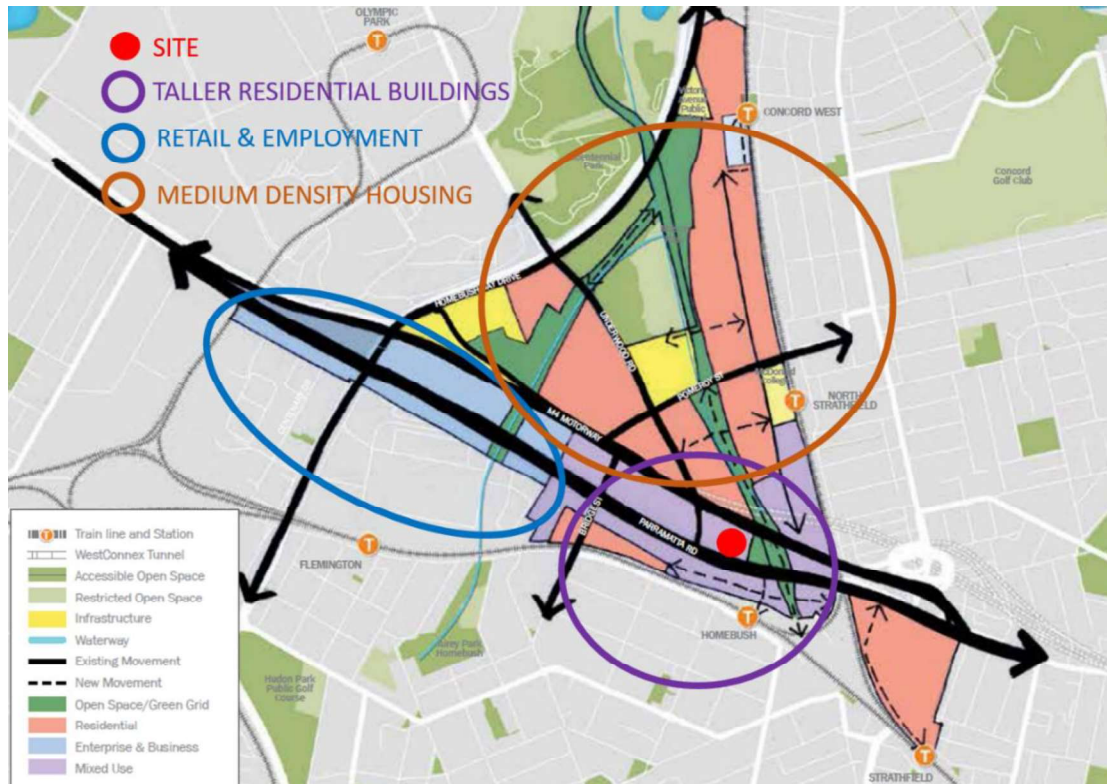


Figure 5: PRCUTS Homebush Precinct Structure Plan components

It is concluded that a new, high density mixed use, primarily residential project on the site has strategic merit, and would be consistent with state plans and planning processes, in particular in the PRCUTS Homebush Precinct, timing, vision and structure, which emphasises the provision of housing to support other employment areas within the Precinct and the region:

1. Long term housing supply to meet Olympic Park new city demand;
2. High density housing blended with other uses.
3. Taller residential buildings at the core; and
4. Strategic timing for rezoning and construction, particularly where a heritage building is involved.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

Proposal objectives are founded on a pragmatic consideration of the character of the locality, the site's constraints and assets, and the strategic framework.

1. Facilitate urban renewal to enable the future delivery of a primarily residential, mixed use project on a large, vacant site strategically located relative to existing and planned urban infrastructure, whilst simultaneously supporting the viability of public and private urban investment.
2. Provide public domain improvements; being a plaza, a refurbishment of the local heritage item in the former Homebush Theatre, and other direct and indirect public benefits that will identify the Homebush Precinct as a distinct new urban place and ultimately provide a civic, social and retail focus for its new community.
3. Facilitate development of a large, vacant and predominately unencumbered urban site to act as a catalyst development for wider urban renewal envisaged in strategic planning documents.

To achieve these objectives, amendment of the following planning controls under Strathfield LEP 2012 has been requested:

- Amend the Height of Buildings Map from 22 metres (42m under Clause 4.3A) to 145 metres as it applies to the site.
- Amend the Floor Space Ratio Map from 2:1 (3.15:1 under Clause 4.4A) to 7.3:1 as it applies to the site.

The proposed Height and FSR exceed the controls recommended in PRUCTS, which are a maximum FSR of 5:1 and a maximum height of 80 metres.

The proposal is complemented by a reference design, which illustrates how massing, heights, floor area and activity components will be allocated across the site. It is intended that the concept will be implemented through a combination of site specific DCP, concept Development Application under Section 4.4 of the *Act*, and Planning Agreement.

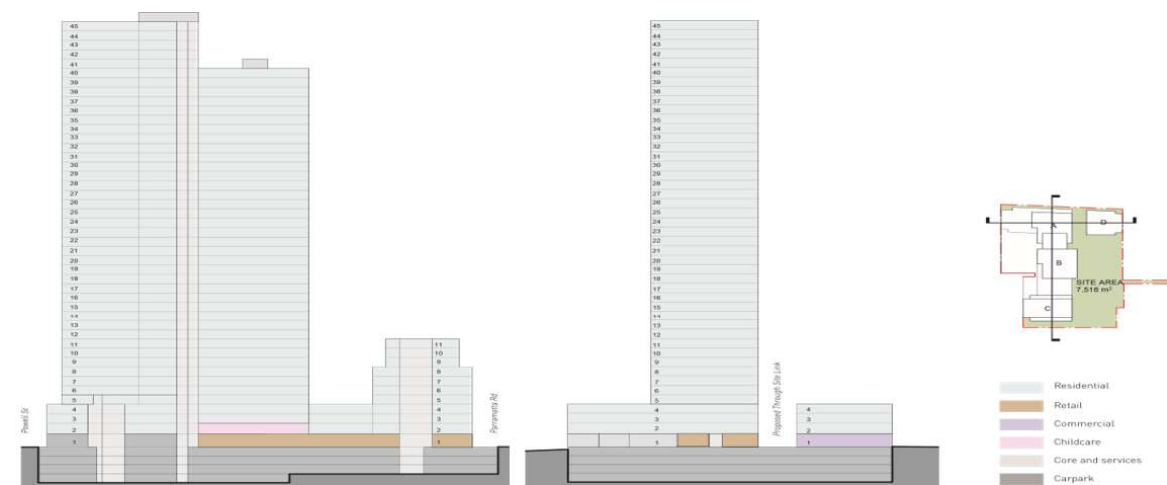


Figure 6: Building envelopes

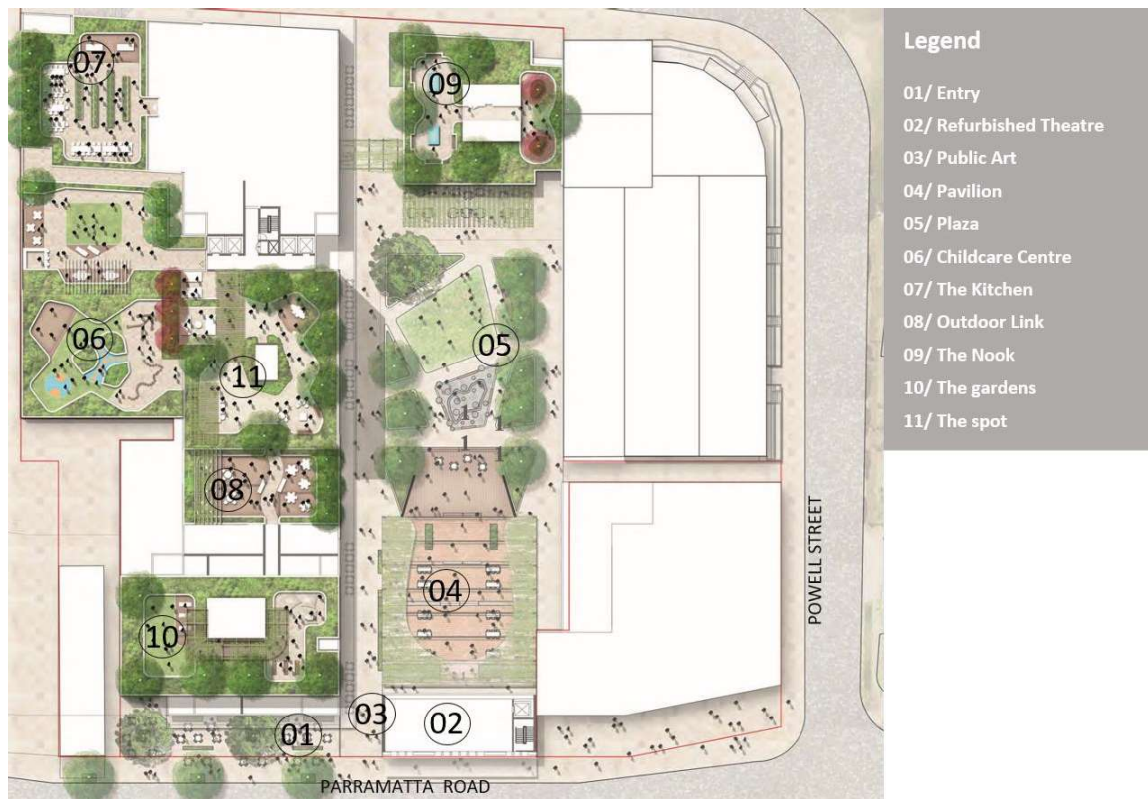


Figure 7: Ground level and terraces



Figure 8: Plaza Sections

4.0 SITE SPECIFIC MERIT

The site has the potential to provide north Homebush with a community destination that is sorely needed. Over the past 10 to 15 years, many high density apartment projects have been completed, but without the services, shops, public areas and meeting points that are required for a functioning community.

The ornate and relatively intact front portion of the Homebush Theatre will be restored and refurbished to become a Parramatta Road landmark, contributing to a sense of place for this quite forlorn area.

It will accommodate bars, cafes and restaurants, providing a community destination that reflects its original role as an entertainment venue. The transformation will be facilitated by the site's owners, the Kemeny family who for 60 years have been successful Sydney food and liquor retailers.

The proposed land uses are consistent with the objectives of the current Mixed Use 4(b) zoning, which PRCUTS recommends be retained.

To protect views to the Theatre, and ensure it is not overwhelmed, new building mass has been concentrated on the site's western side, rather than evenly spread across the site. This has contributed to an exceedance of PRUCTS recommended height controls over half the site, while the remainder of the built form is only 4 storeys, which is well below the PRCUTS recommended control.

Importantly, the relationship between new buildings and the Theatre is compliant with PRUCTS recommended arrangements for heritage interfaces.

It is proposed to remove the Theatre's rear portion, which is highly modified and its original volume destroyed by the insertion of a substantial concrete floor to create 2 levels.

The opened space allows the creation of pedestrian accessible Plaza and laneways, protected by a pavilion that interprets the removed Theatre portion and integrates the retained portion with the new project.

The Plaza will be a sheltered place for the community, and will be complemented by shops and a childcare centre. Affordable rental commercial space will be available to eligible creative, retail or business start-ups for a period of 5 years, adding interest and local commitment to the Plaza. This will follow models applied by Parramatta Council.

It is intended to provide Public Art within the Laneways and Plaza, which will contribute to the sense of community.

A critically need community destination will be provided by the Plaza and laneways, combined with shops, bars and cafes facilitated by the Kemeny family who own the site.

Building envelopes and future land uses have been arranged on the site so that the heritage listed Horse & Jockey Hotel and shops opposite on Parramatta Road can be incorporated into a distinct 'heritage group', reflecting this locality's historic, but now lost, role as a busy town centre.

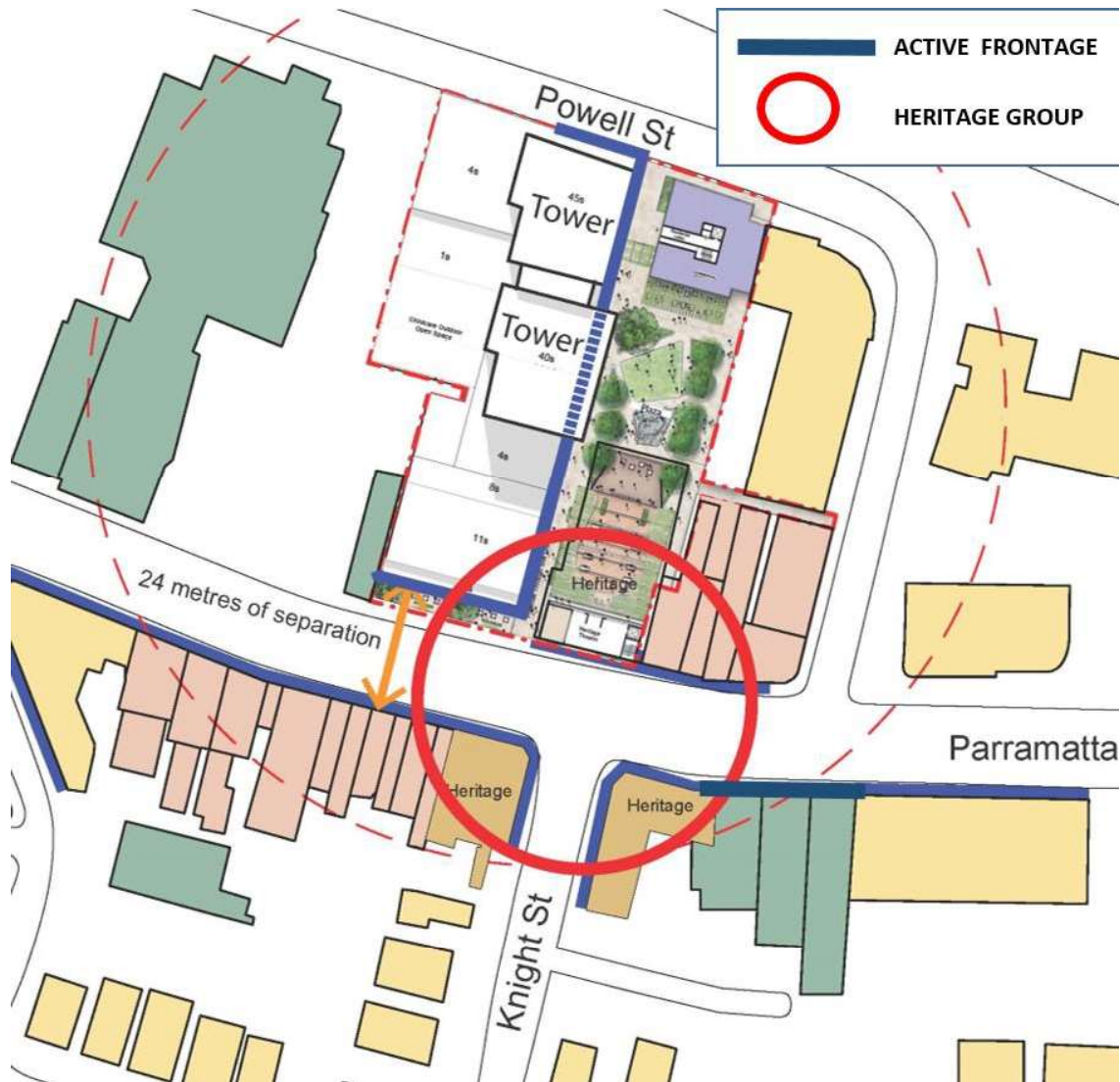


Figure 9: The Heritage Group

The Preliminary Planning Proposal documentation includes confirmation that buildings within the building envelopes will comply with the *Apartment Design Guidelines 2015*.

The site is strategically located within the Homebush Precinct, and the envisaged new project will provide linkages, which are planned in PRCUTS, and will connect future and existing residents to public transport, walking and bike tracks and other destinations such as the nearby Bakehouse Quarter.

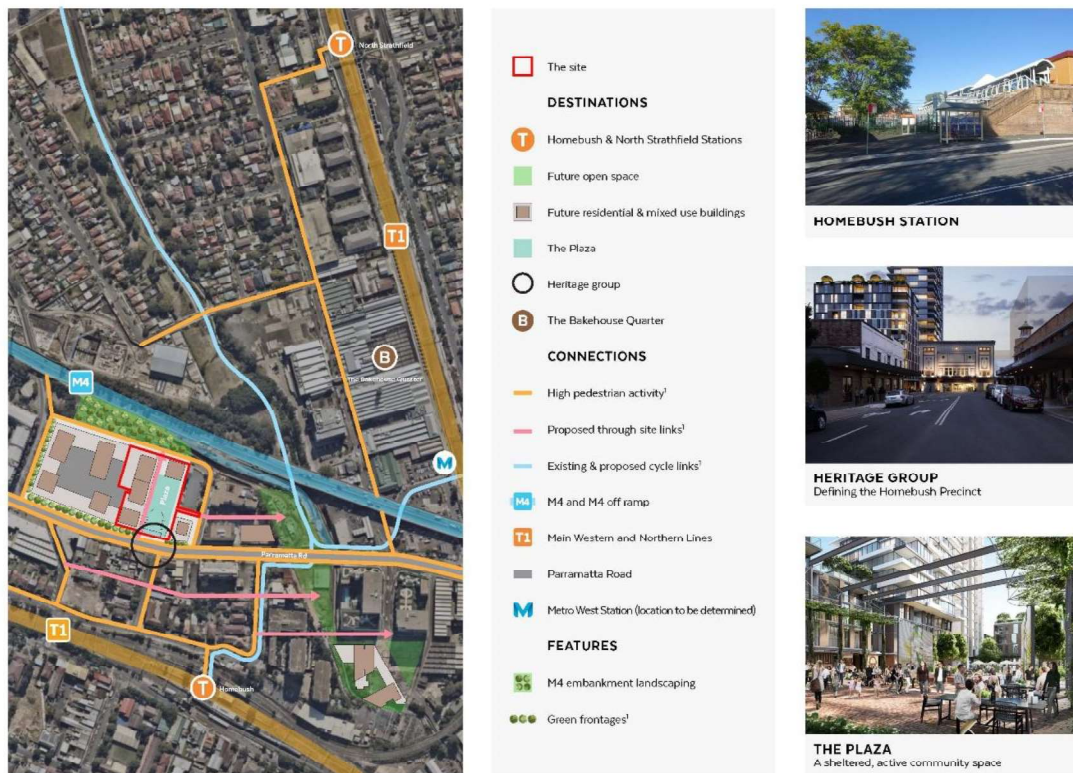


Figure 10: The site is connected to its locality

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The combination of a large vacant site and a striking heritage building facilitates a project that will provide this emerging urban place with a much needed a physical land mark, and also a community destination in north Homebush that is sheltered, active and attractive.

The building envelope heights and FSR proposed are integrated with the layout of uses, and the realisation of community benefits associated with a future project.

Therefore the FSR and Height that has been requested cannot be considered separately from the reference design and draft Public Benefit Offer.

It is intended that the three elements are delivered as a whole.

Therefore it is proposed to prepare a site specific DCP to accompany the Planning Proposal, or obtain concept development approval in accordance with Section 4.4 of the Act to tie the building envelopes, layout of uses and active frontages to achievement of the FSR and Height.

The proposed uses and community benefits will be tied by a Planning Agreement. A draft offer has been provided, but is summarised below. The elements are drawn from PRCUTS and respond to the planning analysis of the site and its locality.

1. 22 Affordable Rental Housing 2 bedroom apartments that will be dedicated to Council or a Community Housing Provider in perpetuity, at an estimated value of \$15 million.
2. Section 7.13 local contributions estimated at \$11 million
3. Section 7.22 state contributions estimated at \$6.6 million
4. Public Art at an estimated value of \$400,000
5. Public domain land dedications and embellishments.
6. Childcare centre, privately operated.
7. Publically accessible Plaza and laneways.
8. Commercial space rented to eligible creative, retail or business started at affordable rates for a period of 5 years.
9. Refurbishment of the Theatre
10. Construction of a Pavilion in a publically accessible Plaza, which will be connected with laneways, to create a sheltered, usable, active and interesting community destination.